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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY India

SUBJECT Process of Tanning of East India Kips Pelts and
Estimate of Leather Yield

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SOURCE

1. [REDACTED]
2. "Generally hides produced in Madras State yield 35 to 40 per cent on the raw weights. This low yield is due to hides being loaded with too much salt, water and high percentage of fleshings left therein. Hides of Madras State are poor in quality, of irregular sizes and give very low assortments. There is an exception; the Malabar hides. These are from animals slaughtered for eating, whereas most of the rest are from dead animals. The Malabar hides also give only 35 per cent leather yield but the assortments and quality is very good. The grain is very close and it gives a firm leather. Erode tannages are generally drawn from Malabar hides. Hence a firm tannage. But there are snags about these. First, all these have big hanging heads and they will not be as spready as Dacca hides.
3. "Most of the light weight hides are drawn from Bengal, especially East Bengal now forming Pakistan. These are of very good quality because they are drawn from slaughtered animals. Muslims predominate here as in Malabar, and they are beef eaters. These are spready, give good selections, uniform size and a close grain.
4. "Wet salted rawhides of Bengal yield 50 per cent leather. Dry salted generally yield 80 per cent. Framed and dried without salt yield 100 per cent.
5. "Since East India Tanned Kips are sold by weights, South Tanners' ultimate aim is the Weight yield of Leather. Some special types of rawhides from Calcutta are very spready and give greater footage. These are slightly costly and as

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lining leathers are sold on footage basis it is advisable to aim at weight rather than measurement. Apparently a hide may cost a cent or two less. But if the footage they yield is compared to the costlier hides they will be much cheaper in the real working.

6. "Hide season: March, April, May and June are summer months in India. During this season the hides will be of poor quality. First, hides drawn from dead animals are of poor quality because the animals that die during summer are due to want of fodder, drinking water, diseases, etc. Those that die are weak ones that cannot stand the extreme heat. Therefore, the quality of hides of summer season, even from dead animals, is very poor. Secondly, people do not eat beef during the summer therefore less animals are slaughtered.
7. "The season for marketing hides in Calcutta begins in July and lasts until March. The best hides are those called Kurbanis and are drawn from Sacrificial animals slaughtered by Muslims in their festival of IDUL-ZUHA. *[See Collector's Note] Tanners sweep whatever they can get from the Kurbanis hides and yield a very good selection. Hides coming throughout September will be of the best quality. Usually tanners buy their requirements for several months during September.
8. "Cawnpore is the other important market where we buy hides. However, we do not get as many hides here as in Calcutta. It is an important market for Buff Calf and the season is from September to March.
9. "Transportation of hides in India creates a great problem. Many times the hides are held at purchasing centers because there is no form of transportation. Top priority is given for good grains.
10. "Hides in Calcutta are usually bought by numbers and not by weight. For example, the prices of hides, which will yield 6 to 6½ lbs of tanned leather are priced at Rs. 10/8 to 11/- per hide ex- Calcutta godown, all other expenses to be borne by buyers.
11. "Tanning Process: At the tannery the hides are first freed of the salt or mud and then are soaked in fresh cold water in the evening. Nothing is added in this water. The hides remain in soak for 12 hours if they are wet salted and 24 hours if they are dry salted. The next morning the hides are removed from soak, all dirt removed in beamhouse, then washed thoroughly in three different fresh waters. Then they are put in lime pits to remain there for 90 days. The hides are turned upside down morning and afternoon during these 90 days.
12. "On the 90th day of liming the hides are removed and dehaired. Then they are put in another liming which is called second liming or liming for plumping the hides. The hides remain in this second lime for five days where they are also handled morning and evening.
13. "On the fifth day of second liming the hides are taken out and put into water in the evening. Next morning they are taken out and fleshed and again put in fresh water. The next day they are taken out and delimed, washed thoroughly and taken to bark pits. Wattle extract liquor is prepared and kept ready in the bark pits to receive the hides. 9/32 ounces of wattle extract to every estimated pound of leather yield is added to make this extract liquor. The hides are placed in the bark pit one after another. Indigenous Avaran and Konnam bark are sprinkled between each hide to prevent kissing. Further, this indigenous bark is also added in the proportion of 3/8 ounces per pound of tanned leather. These indigenous barks are costly but they give very fine tannage. The color is improved. The hide becomes mellow, grain smooth, etc. These indigenous barks have very high qualities of tanning although the percentage of tanning is only 9 to 16 per cent. In fact, if hides and skins are tanned purely with these barks they are of the finest quality. You can keep them for years. They retain the original color, mellowness, etc. However, the cost of tanning will be increased.

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14. "The hides remain in the first bark or extract liquor for two days. On the third day, they are taken out and second fleshing is done to remove any remaining flesh and dirt. Again they are put in the same bark and remain for two or more days. Thus the hides get tanned in first bark for five days.
15. "On the sixth day the hides are taken out of first bark, well squeezed to remove all water and put in second bark. The liquor of the second bark is also prepared in the same way as the first. In second bark the hides remain for eight or nine days.
16. "While in first and second bark the hides are daily handled once.
17. "On the ninth or tenth day the hides are taken out, beamed well and squeezed of all water.
18. "Then they are taken and immersed in first Myrab where they remain for two or three days. The myrab liquor is prepared in the proportion of 1/4 ounce of Myrab powder to every one pound of estimated leather yield. The hides are handled every day here also.
19. "On the third or fourth day the hides are taken out of first myrab, beamed well and taken to second myrab which is prepared in the proportion of 3/16 ounces of Myrab powder to every estimated pound yield of leather. The hides remain here for a day or two when they are taken out washed, beamed, oiled and allowed to dry. After drying they are piled up and kept for one day before setting.
20. "Thus, the total number of days for the tanning process is as follows:

Soaking	1 day	1
1) Lime	8 or 9 days	8 or 9
2) Dehairing and 2nd Lime	5 days	5
3) Fleshing	1 day	1
4) Deliming or scudding (while scudding the hide is washed in 5 fresh waters)	1 day	1
5) 1st Bark (In the middle on the 3rd day the hide is again fleshed of the remaining flesh)	5 days	5
6) Hides taken out and well squeezed		
7) 2nd bark (while in both barks the hides are handled daily)	8 or 9 days	8 or 9
8) Then they are taken out, worked in beamhouse and well squeezed of all water.		
9) First Myrab	2 or 3 days	2 or 3
10) Third or four day worked in beam. use		
11) Second Myrab	1 or 2 days	1 or 2

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| 12) Washed and worked on beamed house and oiled and dried | | |
| 13) Piled up for one day | 1 day | 1 |
| 14) Setting | 1 day | 1 |
| | | <u>38</u> days |

"The above are the usual number of days for the tanning process. However, when the hides are light the number of days are reduced in liming, bark and myrab and the whole process is finished even in 30 days.

[Collector's Note: In submitting this report the source appended the following description of Idul-Zuha: "It will be interesting to know that one of the two most important festivals of Muslims is this Idul-Zuha. This is the day on which pilgrimage takes place in Mecca. This festival is in commemoration of the construction of the First House of God in Mecca by Prophet Abraham. According to KORAN, the sacred revealed book of Muslims, Abraham was the first founder of Islam. It was he who built the First House of God in Mecca and destroyed 320 idols which were there in the biggest temple of Mecca which he converted into the place of worship of One God. There is a black stone there which Muslims believe was sent by God to Abraham as the foundation stone of this House of worship. According to Koran when Abraham was day and night expressing his love for God, He wanted to test him. Hence in his dream, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son Ismail in His name. He asked him to tie a kerchief to his eyes at the time of sacrifice lest his filial love may deter him from sacrificing his own son. Abraham did as he was commanded. To his surprise when he untied the kerchief, he saw son Ismail standing before him smiling and that in the place of Ismail a Lamb was lying sacrificed. God has substituted a lamb for Ismail without the knowledge of Abraham. To commemorate this the Muslim every year perform the festival of Idul-Zuha by sacrificing a lamb for every individual. If one is poor five join together and sacrifice a cow instead. This is the occasion for Pilgrimage to Mecca also. As a matter of fact this sacrificial slaughter of cows by Muslims has led to perpetual Hindu-Muslim riots in India as Hindus regard cows as sacred animals and worship."]

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